RIVER
ILLINOIS

WALKING THE OL' BORDER TOWN

A Guide to Walking Tours

of Momence, Illinois

Sesquicentennial Celebration

1984

INTRODUCTION

To honor the occasion of Momence's Sesquicentennial, the Momence Jayettes have prepared this booklet as a guide to walking tours of some of the city's historic sites and homes. The booklet outlines tours in four areas of town with sites and homes arranged in the order suggested for each walk. There are also a few rural sites mentioned.

This booklet does not presume, given the long and rich history of Momence, to be a complete guide to all homes and sites of historical interest. Material concerning homes was limited to that information given us by the owners; there is, therefore, a wide variance in length of home sketches. The histories of some homes are well chronicled, the histories of others are, unfortunately, lost. Only the briefest of sketches is given of each historic site since this booklet is to be a guide to locations rather than a complete history. Please note, as you walk, the signs marking the building dates of homes and businesses not mentioned in the guide.

Five homeowners have consented to open their homes for a house walk from one to five p.m. on Sunday, July 1. These homes are: Christine and Robert Fry, 227 West Third; Kay Hess, 226 East Third; Martha Woollett, 203 North Pine; Robert and Gena Olson, 426 East Fourth; and Marcelia Wilson and her tenants, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Huhn, 136 West Indiana. These homes will be open for one day only for the hours stated; no other homes will be open at any time. We remind you that this booklet is a guide to walking tours, and we hope you will enjoy viewing the homes and sites from the city sidewalk. We urge you to respect the privacy of historic home owners and owners of newer homes whose residences may be on the site of a landmark from the past and not venture past the public walkway.

In the center of the booklet, you will find a map of the city marked with all historic sites mentioned. Those buildings which are no longer standing are indicated, as well as those which are standing, but are now serving a new purpose.

We hope this guide will enhance your enjoyment of our Sesquicentennial celebration by offering an activity that can be done at each individual's pace and convenience. Too many of us have abandoned the pleasure of the leisurely evening stroll; we hope these little tours will promote some interest in that pastime as well as provide a glimpse of the Momence that used to be.

We would like to thank all of the homeowners who provided the information and pictures that made this booklet possible. We thank Hugh Butterfield for the use of some of his irreplaceable photographs. Finally, we thank Kay Hess both for her support of this project and as an invaluable source of information on our city.

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£denotes landmarks no longer standing

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Columbia House

£denotes landmarks no longer standing
§denotes homes that will be open July 1, 1-5 p.m.

127 North Pine
Currently owned by Roger Elliott

It is not known when this home was built but it was the home of Mayor Hamilton. It was also known as the Brassard family home.

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203 North Pine
1850 - by William Brown
Currently owned by Martha Woollett

This home was built in 1850 by Mr. William Brown. It is largely the same today as it was then. The 1½ story part on the south of the house was originally a school which stood across the street from its present location. Mr. Brown moved it across the street and attached it to the rest of the house. Later the wing at the north was added. The home has been owned exclusively by the Brown and Scramlin families.

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219 North Pine
1894 - by William J. Nichols
Currently owned by Greg and Jone MacDonald

Greg and Jone MacDonald's home was built in 1894 by William J. Nichols. The property was originally owned by James Mix, who sold it to William J. Brown in 1853. Mr. Brown sold the property to Mr. Nichols in 1893. Mary M. Lloyd purchased the house and property in 1909. Subsequent owners were Belle Younger in 1916; Arthur P. Lambert in 1919; Neil Jensen in 1920; and John Doyle in 1975. The MacDonalds purchased the home in 1982.

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225 North Pine
1894 - by W.G. Nichols
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Fey R. Orr

Lot 1, Block 56, or 225 North Pine, was one of several lots purchased by James Mix from the government in about 1850.

In 1853, James Mix sold the lot to W.J. Brown, and in 1893, Mr. Brown sold it to W.G. Nichols. In August, 1894, Mr. Nichols started construction of a new home on this lot. Helen Nichols was his wife, and he had two sons, William R. and Fred M.

After Mr. Nichols death in 1913, his wife had to pay $50 inheritance tax on the house. In 1914, the son Fred and his wife Jessie acquired the home. It sold in 1929 to Mr. and Mrs. E.O. Herman for $8,000. Mrs. Herman died in 1941, and Mr. Herman lived in the home until his death in 1966. In March, 1969, Mr. and Mrs. F.R. Orr purchased the home from the Herman estate.

The building on the back of the lot, which is now the garage, was for the carriage and horse. The stone addition on the back was the manure shed.

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327 North Pine
1872 - by Lewis B. Clark
Currently owned by Harold and Nadine Clem

The first record of the property at 327 North Pine was in 1865 when Hiriam Todd sold the "premises" as platted by James Mix, to George Simmonds. The property sold again in 1867 to Jacob Ruger, and in 1869 to Lewis B. Clark. In 1922, Mr. Clark died and left the property in his will to his daughter, Carrie Paradis. (She and husband Henry Paradis lived at 125 North Maple, the Melby home). The home sold again in 1929 to Mr. and Mrs. Rush Sherwood and was left again in a will to their daughter-in-law. She sold the home in 1962 to Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hoeferlin who sold it in 1974 to the Harold Clem family.

The home appears on an 1880 artist's view of Momence and looks exactly as it does today. An old newspaper account dated 1877 states that Lewis B. Clark hosted an Episcopal men's sociable at his residence. Clark had a livery in the back yard where the garden is now located, and wood from it was used to build the present garage which has a coal or cob bin at the rear of it.

Lewis B. Clark had a brother Fred and a sister Amelia and they were the children of Silas and Mary Clark who came to Momence in 1850 and lived on the south side. Amelia married and moved to Mattoon, Illinois, where her husband, John King, worked for the railroad. Fred and Lewis married sisters: Lewis married Mary Griffin in 1859; Fred married Emma Griffin in 1866. They were the daughters of Asa Griffin who lived on what is now known as the Loitz home at the edge of Grant Park.

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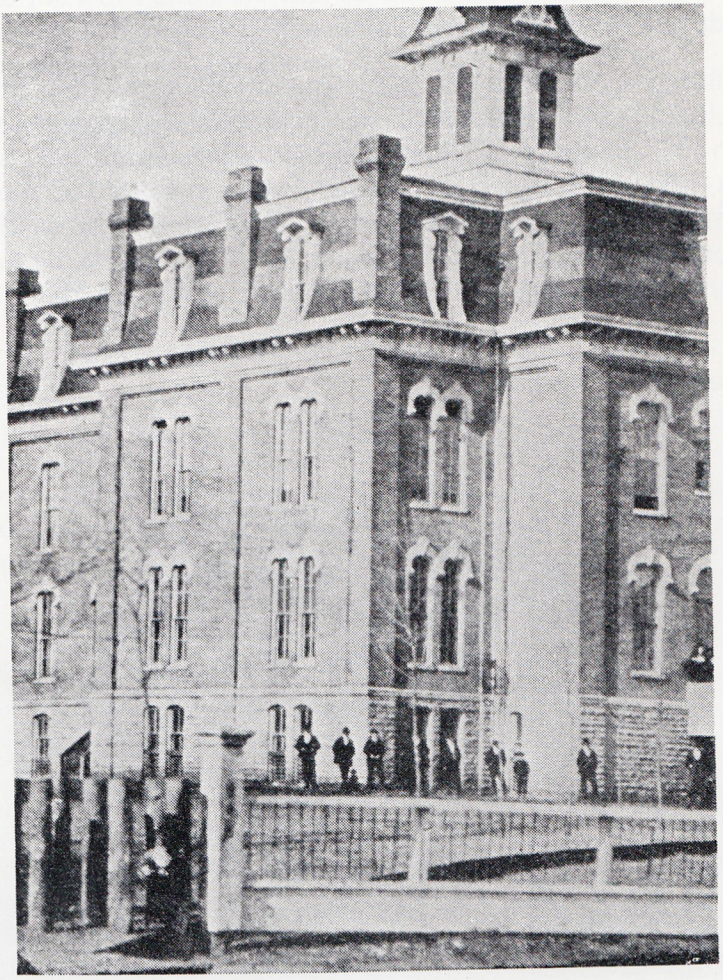
Dixie Highway, between Fourth and Fifth Streets
1870
Central High School

This beautiful building was one of the tallest schools in the county. It was located on Dixie Highway, or Range Street, at the site of the modern Range School. It was in use until approximately 1936 when the present high school was built.



Central High School

Corner Fifth and Pine Streets
1850's
Mt. Airy School Museum

The Mt. Airy School was built circa 1855 and was used as a school until the 1920's. It was moved to its present location in 1983 to be preserved as a school museum.

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519 North Pine
1900 - by Ralph Hardy
Currently owned by Blanche Tremore

The building of the brown stone home at 519 North Pine Street was started in 1900 by the Ralph Hardy family. The enclosed porch was added in 1917. It is believed that this home was one of the first at that time to have indoor plumbing. Mr. Hardy was employed at the Tiffany Brickyard, and the white glazed bricks used around the windows and pillars on the front porch were made there. Ralph Hardy had three daughters: Alice Hungerford, Gladys Hertz, and Irene Hardy.

In May, 1949, the house was sold to the Wilmont Tremore family, and Mrs. Tremore still resides there.

Tremore Home

527 North Pine
1900 - by Ernest Hardy
Currently owned by Mrs. T.H. Bartholomew

In 1864, the lot at Sixth and Pine Streets was purchased by a Mr. Anderson who sold it and repurchased it through the years. Finally, Mr. I.E. Hardy purchased the lot in 1900 and proceeded to build the house. He was a son of Issac Hardy (Tiffany Brickyard) and was superintendent of the brick yard after his father returned to England. Ernest and his wife had four children: Issac, Helena, Lucille, and Grace.

Originally the front entrance was on Sixth Street. Later the house was remodeled and the entrance was changed to face Pine Street and the lovely screened porch was added.

A "sleeping porch" was added upstairs in the back of the house for one of Mr. Hardy's daughters who had health problems.

This lovely home was purchased by the T.H. Bartholomew family in 1955.

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427 North Elm
1891
Currently owned by Bonnie Gilbert

This home was built in 1891 and was remodeled in 1973. It is owned by Bonnie Gilbert. She remembers the very small rooms in the house. The bedrooms were barely large enough for a bed.

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409 North Elm
1888 - by Mr. and Mrs. Scramlin
Currently owned by Lyle and Della Brown

The home of Lyle and Della Brown was built in 1888 by Mr. and Mrs. Scramlin, grandparents of the late Lucy Brown. The Scramlin's son-in-law, Walter Brown, built the house next door (403) in 1886. Lyle and Della Brown purchased their home from Mrs. Walter Brown in 1945. It is believed the lilac bush south of the house was planted long ago by the Scramlins and that some of the trees are very old as well.

218 West Third
1883
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bishir

This home was built by a carpenter whose name was Ritter. Mr. Ritter also built the home at 327 North Pine - just through the alley. The attached garage on the Bishir home was once a barn which was located at the rear of the lot.

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227 West Third
1889 - by Edward Sherman and Susan Lynds Cooke
Currently owned by Robert and Christine Fry

According to tax records, the earliest construction on this property was in 1870. That home was destroyed by fire and the present home was built in 1889. Traces of the earlier construction can be found to the east of the present building and also on the 1880 artist's view of Momence.

The 1889 date of the present home is based on the Eastlake style of construction; the escutcheons on the upstairs doors have 1888 stamped on the back; and in 1889 the Cooke's borrowed $2,000 from Momence Federal to pay for the building of the home. The sidewalks were installed in 1893.

The home was built by Ernest Sherman and Susan Lynds Cooke. He was an early druggist in Momence and operated the "Corner Drugstore," now the location of Jensen's Drugstore. Susan Lynds Cooke was the daughter of Loraine Beebe (the first teacher in Momence) and Dr. David Lynds (an early physician here). Edward Cooke died in 1896, but the home remained in the family until the teens when it became the Younglove home. In 1958, Elizabeth and Clarence Hall purchased it and used it for rental property until 1970 when it was purchased by Alexander and Fay Delk. In 1978, it was purchased by Robert and Christine Fry.

The house has seen at least two major remodeling projects, but, with the exception of bathrooms and kitchen, has never been modernized. All renovation has been "in spirit" restoration in keeping with the original Eastlake style. Small print wallpaper and period furniture add to the original charm of the home.

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225 North Elm
1890 - by L.J. Tiffany
Currently owned by Lester and Karen DuMontelle

This interesting Victorian home, complete with eight-sided cupola and turret, was built around 1890 by L.J. Tiffany. The house was constructed of "seconds" from the family brickyard which were hand chipped and laid enamel side in to simulate stone—a popular building material of the Victorian period. A very unusual feature of the interior of the home is the standard two-person elevator which is still in operation between the first and second floors. The original carriage house, with its small window for the horse stall, is now in use as a garage.

Josephine Tiffany and her husband Phillip Marcotte lived in the home after the death of her parents. In the 1970's the home was acquired by the Lester DuMontelle family.

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304 West Second
1892 - by Axel and Deal Stratton Wikstrom
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Suprenant

The Wikstrom home at the corner of Elm and Second was built as a town house for Axel and Deal Stratton Wikstrom. They made frequent trips to Europe and filled the home with furniture and souvenirs of their journeys. The Wikstroms had no children, but their home was often open for social functions such as the traditional Christmas party in Swedish style for small children of the community. Mr. Wikstrom died soon after the fine home was built, but Mrs. Wikstrom lived there for many years and took an active part in the social life of the city.

The Sisters from St. Patrick's Academy acquired the home from the estate of Mrs. Wikstrom in 1922 and it was used as a girls' boarding school. It was later used as a home for the Sisters. In 1964, the home was sold to Henry Mackin and in 1966 to Hilbert Strassenburg, although it is believed no one lived there 1964-66. In 1967 the home was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Suprenant.

37 South Elm
1890
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. William Therien

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Corner Washington and Market Streets
The Old Mill

The Old Mill was used for the grinding of grain. Many residents of the community remember this landmark which was torn down in the 1950's.

Old Grain Mill

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119 North Market
1895
St. Patrick's Church Rectory

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220 North Market
1875
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Wille

Little is known of this home except that the following people have owned it since it was platted by James Mix in 1853: Helen Mix, Henry Baldwin, Amy Hadsel, Solomen Kenrich, David Shrontz, Hannibal Worcester, Job Cox, Margaret Cox, Hattie Cox, N.C. Anderson, Ivan D. O'Brien, Elsie Jensen, and the Louis Wille family.

As a point of interest, Hannibal Worcester was a member of the Anti-Horse Thief Association along with William Parish. This group traveled throughout the community in search of horse thieves.

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Corner of Franklin, Second, and Hill Streets
1891
The Hay Palace

This impressive structure was constructed from bales of Timothy hay in 1891. Used for exhibitions and public events, the Palace was a huge 217 × 224 feet. There was also a 100′ machinery hall. Lighted by electricity, the first such use of electric power in Momence, the Palace was widely publicized and well attended, so well attended that the Palace was refurbished and opened for one more year, 1892. Today all that remains of the fabulous Hay Palace are the walnut trees which surround the site on West Second Street.

The Hay Palace

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524 West Fourth
1870 - by B.F. Gray
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Borggren

B.F. Gray, a self-taught lawyer, built this home in 1870. His daughter married A.J. Kyle and lived in the home until her death. The home was in the Gray family until 1958 when the James Mackin family refurbished the home and added the screened porch. The house has also been occupied by the Dorn and Willis families. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Borggren purchased the home in 1977.

205 North Dixie Highway
Opera House
Currently Ron's Plumbing and Heating

The Opera House, located at the corner of Second Street and Dixie Highway, was also known as Guertin Hall and was in use until about 1915.

The Opera House - Guertin Hall

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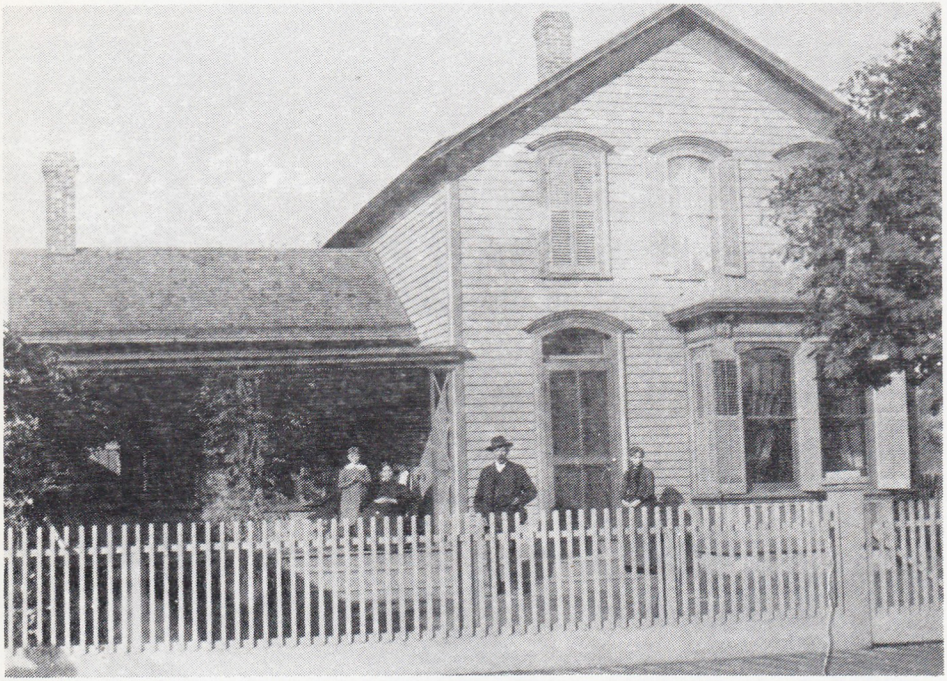
177 North Dixie Highway
1869
Historical Home

This home was built in 1869 and is decorated in the period 1870-1889. The home is open every Saturday and Sunday from 1-5 p.m., June through September.



Historical Home

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122 North Dixie Highway
Wennerholm Livery Stable

The Wennerholm Livery Stable was housed in the building that now is home to Momence Finer Foods.

Below: a view of Dixie Highway at its intersection with Washington Street, decorated for a celebration.

Dixie Highway View

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122 West Washington
1914 - Community Hall
Currently occupied by Momence Auto Parts

This site, next to Ganeer Hall, was the site of a community hall which included a gym and meeting rooms for civic affairs. All basketball games, wrestling matches, and boxing matches were held there. It also contained a stage. The Community Hall was used until 1936 when the new high school was built.

126 West River Street
1890
Currently owned by Melford and Irma Price

Little is known of the early history of this house which was built in 1890, except that Jennie Cleary, one of the city's most beloved school teachers, spent part of her girlhood here.

In 1941 or 1942, Oscar Dominik purchased the property from Pete Swier. Mr. Dominik added the kitchen and enlarged the basement. Melford and Irma Price purchased the home from Mrs. Flora Dominik in 1971. They added a new kitchen, bathroom, opened and replaced the stairway, and did extensive redecorating. In 1981, Mr. Price's mother moved to the Price home and a 16 × 30 foot addition was built on the north side of the home. This became her quarters until her death in 1983. Other additions to the property include the play house in 1973, and a deck in 1982.

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123 West River Street
1880-1890 - Brown's Cider Mill
Currently the site of City Hall

Brown's Cider Mill was located on the Kankakee River, currently the site of City Hall.

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109 West River Street
Patterson Wagon Company
Currently Don's Saw and Lawn Mower Shop

The Patterson Wagon Company decorated wagons with what we would now call "pin-striping" and other fancy designs.

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Corner Dixie Highway and River Street
Burton's Stone Corner
Currently the site of Jim's Texaco

This dry goods store was also the site of a cap factory.

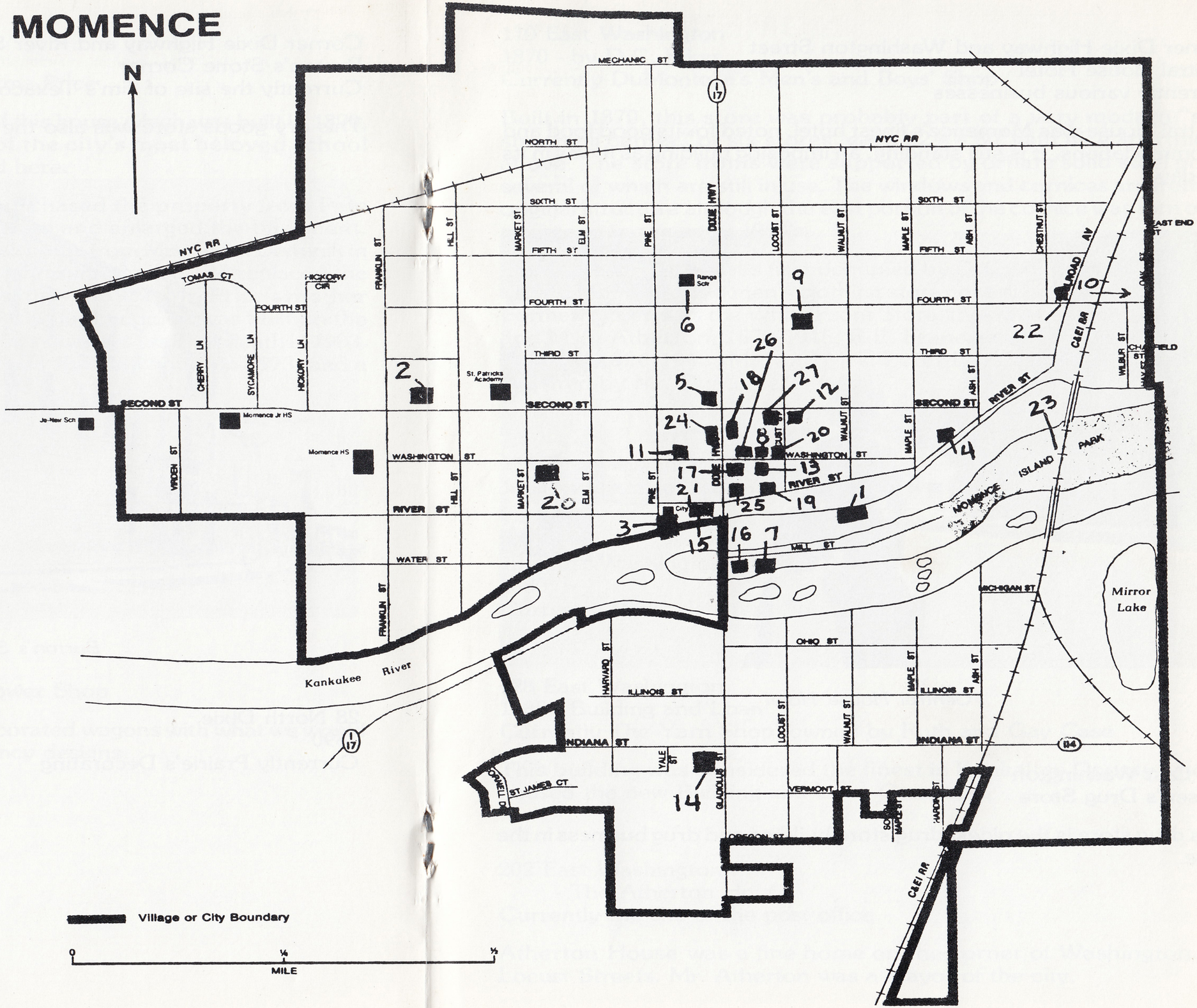
Burton's Stone Corner

. . .

28 North Dixie
1890
Currently Prairie's Decorating

MOMENCE

1. Old Dam and Power Mill
2. Hay Palace
3. Brown Cider Mill
4. Paradis Wagon Company
5. Opera House
6. Old Central High School
   Mt. Airy School
7. Strunk Mill
8. Exchange Bank
9. Old Brick School
10. Ice Pond
11. Community Hall
12. Chipman Library
13. Jensen's Drug Store
14. Loraine School
15. Patterson Wagon Company
16. Toll Booth
17. Central House
18. Wennerholm Livery Stable
19. Atherton Store
20. Building and Loan
    Cromwells Meat Market
21. Horse Fairs
22. Columbia House
23. Island Park
24. Historical Museum
25. Burton's Stone Corner
26. DuMontelle's Store
27. Episcopal Church



Corner Dixie Highway and Washington Street
Central House Hotel
Currently various businesses

Central House was Momence's finest hotel, noted for its good food and accommodations. It is still standing, an imposing building as it was in its hey-day.

Central House Hotel

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113 East Washington
Jensen's Drug Store

This drug store is the oldest drug store building and drug business in the state.

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110 East Washington
1870 - by D.C. Riker
Currently DuMontelle's Men's and Boys' Shop

Built in 1870, this store was probably part of a very modern "strip shopping center" of six stores, each 22½ × 80′ with nice apartments above. The store fronts were supported by ornate solid steel posts, several of which are still in use. The windows and cornices are from the original structure although the east portion of the cornice was torn off by a tornado in the early 1960's.

DuMontelle's Store was first occupied by D.C. Riker in 1870 and has served Momence as a men's clothing store continuously since that time. Formerly known as the White Front Store, the owners were: D.C. Riker and M.A. Atherton, 1870-1915; R.E. France and Jarvais, 1916-1925; France, 1926-1948; Mr. and Mrs. Peter Bass, 1948-1957; and was acquired by Mr. DuMontelle in 1957.

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114 East Washington
1860 - Exchange Bank

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121 East Washington
1880
Currently Marsha's Dress Shop

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128 East Washington
1885 - Building and Loan
Currently The Yarn Shop, owned by Ruth and Gay Case

This building was considered the finest in Kankakee County when it housed the new Building and Loan Company.

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202 East Washington
- The Atherton House
Currently the site of the post office

Atherton House was a fine home on the corner of Washington and Locust Streets. Mr. Atherton was a mayor of the city.

123 East River Street
1852 - Atherton Hardware Store
Currently the site of River Street Mall

Atherton Hardware Store dates back to 1852 and is on the site of the present River Street Mall, formerly Mullady's Grocery.

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208 East Washington
1855 - known as Sanstrom House
Currently the site of May-Lan Candles owned by Maybelle Landry

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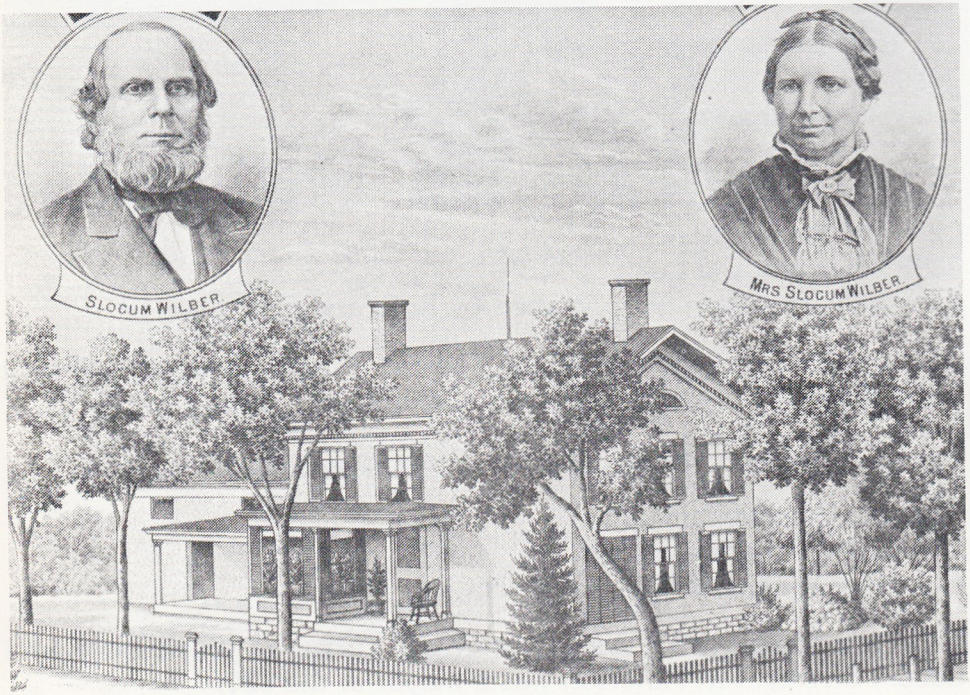
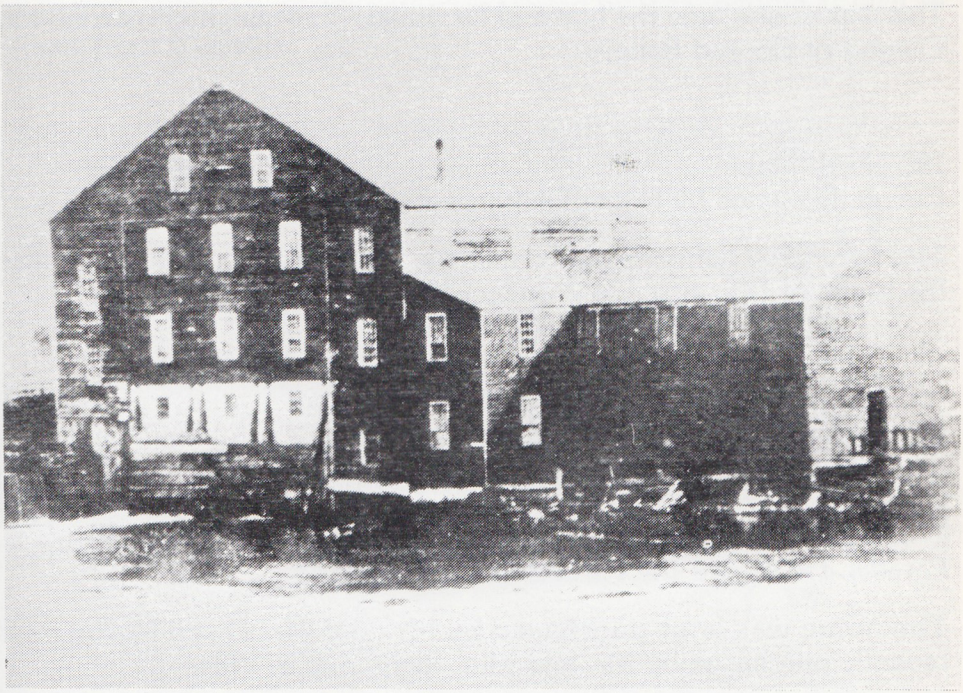
216 East Washington
1850 - by Slocum Wilbur
Currently owned by Doris T. McCauley

This home is unique in that it has remained virtually unchanged. It was the home of Slocum Wilbur, a pioneer seedsman. He developed and sold both garden seeds and seed for field crops. The room on the left in the upstairs of the house was sometimes used for drying seed. Note the door upstairs on the back of the house.



Slocum Wilbur Home

Old Dam and Power House
Near present Ko-Pak, Inc.



Dam and Power House

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307 East Washington
- Paradis Wagon Factory
Currently the site of Ko-Pak, Inc.

This business was housed in the stone building that has now been covered with stucco and is the front building of Ko-Pak, Inc., on East Washington Street.

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103 North Maple
- D.C. Riker
Currently owned by Linda Roberts

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112 North Maple
- Formerly the home of Dr. Kaiser
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. David Rattin

This was at one time the home of Dr. Kaiser. His daughter married Mr. Conrad of Conrad Bakery.

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122 North Maple
Currently owned by Roger Elliott

This very large home was known as the Worcester home, and was also the home of D.E. Stiles, a prominent banker.

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125 North Maple
1891 - by Henry C. Paradis
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lane

This house was built in 1891 and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Paradis. He owned the Paradis Wagon Factory.

The home was later purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Melby, and recently purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Rich Laue in 1984.

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203 North Maple
1895 - by Benjamin L. Tabler
The Tabler House

A prominent Momence businessman, Benjamin L. Tabler, built this home on the corner of Maple and Second Streets. Later, a son, Clyde, and his wife Frances lived in this home. Benjamin Tabler owned the B.L. Tabler and Son Lumber and Coal business which is still in operation under the ownership of Fey R. Orr.

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Island Park

This unique park between the two channels of the Kankakee River has been a place for outings and family picnics for many years. Boat excursions were a popular activity enjoyed by local people as well as visitors from Chicago.

Island Park

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Strunk Mill

Currently the site of the Log Cabin near Dixie Highway at the entrance to the Island in the River.

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Toll Booth

Near the site of the old Conrad Bakery

The toll booth for the first bridge across the river was located on the island at the site of the Conrad Bakery west of the new little log cabin.

8 Gladiolus Avenue
1890 - by Dr. Broad, a Veterinarian
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Heninger

The Harry Heninger home at 8 Gladiolus Avenue was built in 1890 by Dr. Broad who was a veterinarian and an uncle of Dr. Ernest Woolridge, also a veterinarian in Momence for a number of years. The room on the north of the Heninger home was used as an office by Dr. Broad.

Peter Brouillette was later an owner of the property and while it was under his ownership, the hall which had been on Island Park was moved to property adjoining the house and used as a dance hall. This hall was later moved to the W.W. Parish farm and a new dance hall was built. It was used for social gatherings, dances, and roller skating.

Floyd Brouillette was born at this address and remembers there was a Wurlitzer Music Box used, as well as an orchestra. It was composed of Placid Sharkey, fiddle; Jim Montague, fiddle; Paul Therien, drums; and Phillip Long, piano.

The property was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. William Heninger and son Harry in 1933. In 1934, Harry Heninger and Velma Pemble were married and purchased the home from his parents; and it was their home until 1983.

The Assembly Hall was torn down, all except the west part, which was made into a garage. The lumber from the building was used to build a home for the William Heningers just east of the other house. The garage was used for a polling place until the new township garage was built.

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120 South Walnut
1890 - by Henry and Alice Chipman Davis
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Milo Davis

Henry and Alice Chipman Davis built this home in 1890, and it has remained in the possession of the Davis family to the present day. The house has been remodeled and enlarged, the four north rooms being the original core of the house.

202 South Walnut
1890
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Donald LaCosse

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South Gladiolus at Indiana Street
Loraine School
Currently a park

The Loraine School was named for Momence's first school teacher, Loraine Beebe. The school was on the site of the South Side Playground on the curve of highway 114.

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136 West Indiana
1895 - by W.W. Parish, Jr.
Currently owned by Marcelia Wilson

This home was built in 1895 by W.W. Parish, Jr. and his wife Catherine. It was sold in the early part of this century to John Sharkey. Ownership changed every few years after leaving the Sharkey family in 1929. The home received an addition during the 1940's and was annexed to the city of Momence in 1964. It was sold by the DuMontelle family to the Wilson family in 1966.

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139 W. Indiana
1890 - by William Butterfield
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Earl Clark

This home was built in 1890 on land purchased from W.W. Parish, Jr. by William Butterfield. The house was purchased by Thomas and Hattie Clark in 1903. The property was converted to apartments in 1936, and is now owned by Earl and Edna Clark.

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R.R. 6, Box 49 - at the junction of Routes 1 and 17
1865-1875 - by George Brown
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Brent Langman

The present Langman Farm was purchased by George Lake Brown (1835-1913) for $4 an acre at the close of the Civil War. He used his mustering out pay from the army to buy this farm and the one across the highway (the present Everett Kinney farm). Some may remember the old farmhouse on the Kinney farm which was taken down a few years ago. George Brown built that house with lumber he brought from Chicago with a team and wagon. He was on his return trip with lumber when he saw a glow in the sky which was the Chicago fire.

History handed down verbally through the generations states that the present Langman home was purchased for $200 by George Brown and moved onto its present location from what is now known as the George Lueth farm (first farm west of Jct. 1 on the south side of Rt. 17). The north portion of the present home was built sometime between 1865-1875 and this is what was moved prior to 1913. The home was added onto at a later date on the south side. The foundation of the common wall between the original house and the addition is a large hand-hewn log, all the nails are square-headed, and all the 2 × 4's are full measure and difficult to nail into.

After the death of George Brown in 1913, his two children inherited the two farms. First pick went to Johnnie Brown who chose the farm on the north side; Georgia (who married Frederick Langman in 1909) inherited the farm on the south side of the road. Fred and Georgia moved away from and back onto the farm several times. Their son Robert, who was born in 1918 at the Avon, remembers living on the farm at the age of 3 when it was his job to water the two new maple trees in the front yard—still standing today. At the age of 6 it was his job to ride his black pony along the fencerows to check the sheep and make sure they were not caught in the woven wire fence.

Many people have lived in the house over the years. Three are remembered:

1922 - Rex Sharkey (parents of Orville and Ruth, Mrs. Anthony Parish)
1933 - John Crayton
1938 - Levi Reckhemmer

In 1942, Robert and Elizabeth Langman and son Brent moved to the farm and lived there until 1977. Since 1978 it has been the home of Brent and Rita Langman and family.

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West end of Vincennes Trail
1873 - by the Metcalf family
Currently owned by Betty Metcalf Foale

In 1873 the Metcalf family built this house along the Kankakee River at a spot that was used by the Indians to ford the stream. Mrs. Foale's grandmother, Jemima Metcalf, remembered the house as a popular weekend retreat for hunters and fishermen from Chicago. Pilings found in the river by the owner's brothers, Silas L. and Paul Metcalf, indicate the existence of a bridge at this location.

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East Fourth Street
The Ice Pond

The Ice Pond is located on the east side of the C & EI tracks. Follow Fourth Street across the tracks and go straight to the black-topped parking lot on the pond. The Eugene Ice Company was only one of several that used this pond. Ice was shipped out of Momence to other areas. The Ice Pond gave employment to many people.

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Second and Locust Streets
- built with funds donated by Edward Chipman
Momence Public Library

The Momence Public Library was used as a hospital during the terrible flu epidemic that broke out at the end of World War I.

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Second and Locust Streets
1882
Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd

The Church of the Good Shepherd began with a Sunday School in 1867; a chapel in 1976; and finally the present church building in 1882. The church celebrated its Centennial year in 1982. Highlighting the centennial celebration was the dedication of the needlepoint kneelers, a beautiful addition to this lovely and historic church.

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203 North Locust
1875
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Ruge

The original structure on this site was a small home which was moved across the street and forms the core of the home of Edith Gibson. The present home of Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Ruge was built in 1875. According to Mrs. Ruge, there were once beautiful gardens on the north side of the home. The home also serves as the Ruge Funeral Home.

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212 North Locust
circa 1853
Currently owned by Mrs. Edith Gibson

From 1853 to 1941 the property at 212 North Locust Street was owned by seven different people. At the present time, it is owned by Joseph B. France and Edith Gibson. The home was remodeled in 1948.

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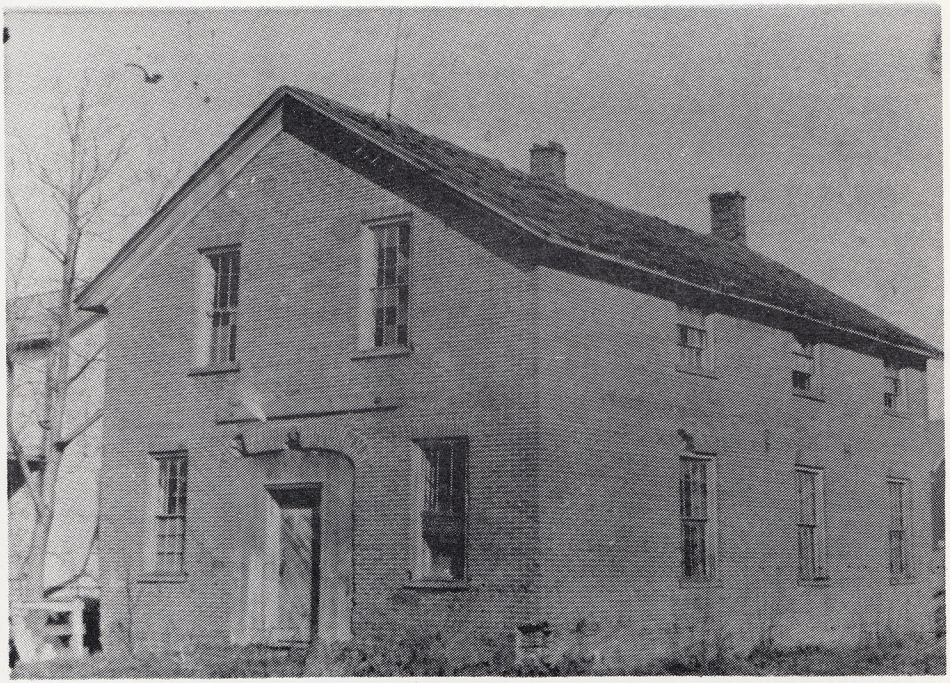
219 North Locust
- known as Dr. Nickerson's home and office
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Dunaway

Dr. Anson LeRoy Nickerson came to Momence in 1905 and married Laura May Chesney, principal of Momence High School, in 1906. The Nickersons first lived above Astle's Hardware Store where Dr. Nickerson had an office and also where their first daughter was born. The family relocated to 219 North Locust around 1909-10. The original home had two porches—one for the home and one for the office. Many improvements were made such as installing hardwood floors, putting concrete flooring in the basement, and making one porch across the front of the home before the family moved to Kankakee in 1919.

The home is currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Dunaway.

218-224 North Locust Street
- The Old Brick School
Currently the site of the Shanholtz and Vickery homes

Momence's first school was built on the property that is now occupied by the Shanholtz and Vickery homes.



The Old Brick School

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519 North Locust
Formerly the home of Dr. Longpre'
Currently owned by George Wood

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425 North Walnut
1892
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Calvo

This home was built in 1892. Past owners of this graceful home include: Ada and Henry Brown, 1895-96; Issac and Mary Hardy, 1896-99; George and Jennie Sargeant, 1899-1934; Grace and Noble Vanzant, 1934-45; Arnold and Harriet Sherwood, 1945-67.

The home is probably most remembered as the home and office of Dr. Vanzant. Current owners are Joyce and Jorge Calvo who purchased the home in 1967.

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424 North Walnut
1870 - Cromwell's Grocery
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Porter

Although completely remodeled and refurbished out of necessity, this home has a very interesting history. It was originally located at the corner of Washington and Locust where, after its construction in 1870, it housed Cromwell's Grocery. Years later, it was moved to its present site as a private residence. During the recent remodeling, two interior chimneys had to be removed. Subsequently, bricks from these chimneys were used in construction of a walkway at the Church of the Good Shepherd, which was one of the projects to celebrate the church's centennial in 1983. Bricks from the chimneys have also been used in making repairs on the Little Red Schoolhouse, now located at Range School. Two very fitting uses for materials from this house with a varied history.

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407 North Walnut
1891 - by Edward Chipman
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Gereg

This home was built by Edward Chipman in 1891. His two housekeepers were the aunts of Martha Woollett. Miss Woollett stayed at the Chipman home during a childhood bout with diphtheria where she was treated by Momence's first woman doctor. The doctor was somewhat of a pioneer in the field of hygiene—donning a smock before examining patients and washing her hands before and after each examination.

Mr. Chipman died in 1910. He bequeathed $10,000 to build the Momence Public Library and left his fine home to his son who died without heirs in 1927. His two sisters, Mrs. McDomell and Mrs. Robertson, inherited the home and sold it in 1951 to Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Fieleke. The Ralph Gereg family purchased it in 1971.

The exterior color scheme is the same as the original. The bricks in the construction of the house were all made in Momence including the interesting "Grapes of Wrath" brick which may be seen centered over the basement window.

Gereg Home

327 North Walnut
1873 - by Mr. and Mrs. Edwin V. Arnold
Currently owned by Mrs. Frances Prairie

This residence was built by Edwin V. and Elizabeth Arnold in 1873. In April, 1888, the Durhams sold the home to Gustave Meinzer. Meinzer's death in an accident a year later left a widow and two children, Frank and Myrtle. The widow, Alma, later married Pleasant Durham and they lived in the house until December, 1898, when they transferred the property to Carl Hack. After the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Hack, the house went to their son, Charles, operator of a dry goods store in Momence for many years.

Mr. Hack remodeled the house extensively after the turn of the century, adding a rear wing which included a kitchen, pantry, and bathroom on the first floor and a bathroom and bedroom on the second floor.

In May, 1917, the home was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Halls. Mr. Halls was city clerk of Momence for many years; their daughter is Mrs. Larry Deardurff who still resides in this city.

Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Prairie purchased the home from the Halls on January 13, 1945. Mr. Prairie is deceased, but Mrs. Prairie still lives in this handsome home. The two buckeye trees in the front of the house are believed to be as old as the residence itself, a living link to the past.

Prairie Home

316 North Walnut
1875
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Uknavage

James Edward Hardy, eldest son of Issac Hardy (Tiffany Brickyard) lived in this home with his wife and little daughter, Daisy. Shortly after little Daisy drowned in the river, Mr. Hardy died. Several years later, Mrs. Hardy returned to England.

The home is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Uknavage, and little is known about the history of the home.

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304 East Third Street
1850
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Larry Deardurff

O.L. and Marjorie Deardurff have owned the property since October 25, 1937. The Deardurffs rented the home for ten years before purchasing it. At that time, the home was the property of Frank V. Davis, a widower, whose wife had inherited it from her mother, Adeline Webster in 1884. Mrs. Webster had bought it from Jeremiah Mogg in 1877.

As Mr. Davis lived in Ohio, he first rented it to Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur King and daughter Alice. The Kings built a new home on Locust Street (the Shanholtz home) in 1927 and the Deardurffs began renting the Davis property for $17 a month.

The Deardurffs are proud of the fact that some of their friends have also resided in their home on Third Street. Mrs. Lester (Helen McKinstry) DuMontelle, Sr.'s brother Rolland was born in the house 79 years ago. Also, Mrs. Harold (Jennie) Turner resided here with her father, Mr. W.P. Pederson, from 1913-1915.

Built in 1850, the house was extensively remodeled after the Deardurffs purchased it. One interesting project was the addition of sidewalks. The W.P.A. had a sidewalk construction project at one time. The Deardurffs were able to secure new sidewalks on both sides of the house by splitting the cost 50-50 with the W.P.A.

This lovely home has a long and happy history, as noted by Mrs. Deardurff, "As we have resided here since March of 1927, we have many treasured memories of our lives together here for fifty-seven years amidst relatives, neighbors, and friends."

226 East Third
1872 - by Dr. John Shronts
Currently owned by Mrs. Kay Hess

The house was built in 1872 by Dr. John Shronts, pioneer doctor in this area. He was a native of Pennsylvania, trained in medicine at the University of Michigan. The house also served for a time as his office. The west living room was devoted to his practice, and the present bathroom downstairs was his private office and drug room. The carriage block on the parkway is a relic of the early days, and is one of the few left in the county. It and a hitching post were placed there for the convenience of the doctor's patients.

The house is largely unchanged inside, except for some superficial remodeling. The floors upstairs are original, but chimneys which were used with baseburner heating upstairs are gone. The dining room has been thrown together with another living room to make a larger room.

The sheds at the west of the house, off the screened porch, were originally used for storage of coal and corncobs for the heating and cooking stoves, and the old doctor had a wood-working shop in another shed. The stable stood where the Wheeler house is at the west, and a grape arbor connected the west porch with the stable. During the reign of the horse-thieves at Bogus Island, the doctor lost horses from that stable.

Other residents of the home have included Dr. Joseph Gamet and Dr. Don Keating and their families; E.O. Herman and wife Frances also lived here for a while.

This has been the Hess home for 47 years—longer than anyone else. An item of interest inside the home is the kitchen light fixture which is a wheel from the old Beyerlein Mill. The wheel was made in 1820 and was part of the original Baldwin Mill on the river.

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305 East Third
1890
Currently owned by Ed Van Swol

This home was two homes joined together to make one. One part of the home was pulled across the river on ice from the south side and joined to a smaller structure to make the present residence.

311-315 East Third

The Cantway/Moerschel homes were once one home and it was located on the site of the present Ben Franklin Store at the corner of Locust and Washington. The home was purchased by Harry Hall and a Mr. Benjamin cut the two homes apart, they were moved to their present location, and have served as two separate homes for many years.

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317 North Maple
1875
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Wilbert Smith

This property was sold to Anson A. Culver, a druggist in Momence, by Hiriam Todd. Mr. Culver lived at this address from 1875 to 1891. Personal letters dating back to the Civil War period, receipts, and a price list for various sewing and clothing items were found in the home during remodeling and traced to Mr. Culver. Culver sold the property to Charlotte T. Clark whose relatives still live in the area.

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420 East Fourth
Currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carpenter

The exact date of the construction of this house is not known, but the first sale of the home was in 1882, when Helen Mix and her husband John, sold the house to William P. Watson. Some of the names and dates that make up the long history of this home follow:

1888 - sold to S.N. Dennis and Charles S. McNichols;
1889 - S. Dennis bought out McNichols and transferred ownership to John Paradis;
1892 - John and Annie Paradis sold to John Fedde;
1903 - John and Jennie Fedde sold to Samuel F. and Isabella Reynolds;
1907 - Reynolds sold to Fred G. Klem;
1909 - J.J. Kirby was appointed trustee for the property, and following Klem's death, his mother, Bertha Durham inherited the house;
1929 - Inherited by Sarah E. Worthington;
1935 - Worthington bequeathed it to Cyril LeRehette
1938 - LeRehette sold property to Dr. and Mrs. Woolridge, who lived next door to the east, as income property;
1970 - Property sold to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carpenter.

The house is essentially in its original condition with the exception of an enclosed back porch.

426 East Fourth
1894 - by Mr. and Mrs. Johnson
Currently owned by Robert and Gena Olson

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson built this home in 1894. During construction, the family lived upstairs in the barn. Mr. Johnson was a carpenter, employed by the B.L. Tabler Lumber Company.

The Johnson's daughter, Selma, was born in the house in 1895. In May, 1924, she married Dr. Woolridge, a veterinarian. The doctor had a small animal hospital in the garage, which was enlarged and rebuilt over the original garage. The house was also enlarged, with a back porch being added first, and the living room expansion and front porch coming a few years later.

Dr. and Mrs. Woolridge both lived in the house until their deaths. The house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Rufus McLean in 1975; Robert and Gena Olson purchased the home in 1980.

Olson Home

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503 East Fourth
1882 - by Helen Paradis and her husband
Currently owned by Misses Josephine and Vernie Bukowski

This lot was purchased in 1879 and the home built in 1882 by Helen Paradis and her husband.

The home was purchased in 1901 by August and Antonia Bukowski. The Bukowski family had grown to include eleven children before an addition was added to the house in the 1940's. The home is still occupied by two of the Bukowski daughters—Josephine and Vernie.

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Railroad Avenue and Fourth Street
1870 - The Columbia House

The Columbia House, an inn, was built after the railroad was completed in 1870. The proprietor was a Mr. Dray. The Columbia House was primarily used by railroad men to rest up. Salesmen also used the premises as headquarters. It was a popular place to have Sunday dinner and served many fine meals.

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WALNUT
MAPLE
ST.
PINE
RANGE
ST.
ST.
ST.
ST.
MOMENCE
1888